



## **Florida House of Representatives**

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## **LEGISLATION TO RESTORE WORKERS' COMPENSATION REFORMS PASSED IN BOTH CHAMBERS AND MOVES TO GOVERNOR**

*~Legislation Will Help Preserve Jobs For Florida's Workers~*

**TALLAHASSEE** – Both chambers of the Florida Legislature today voted to approve House Bill (HB) 903 – Attorney's Fees in Workers' Compensation Cases. The legislation restates the Legislature's intent in 2003 when the workers' compensation system was reformed and, except in medical-only cases, the Legislature limited overall attorney compensation through a contingency fee schedule based upon benefits secured.

"Affordable workers' compensation premiums are critical to recharging Florida's economy and creating and maintaining jobs in Florida. It is common sense that an injured worker should not receive less compensation than his or her attorney," said Representative Anitere Flores (R-Miami), the sponsor of the bill. "This bill leaves little doubt that we meant what we said in 2003."

Prior to the 2003 reforms, Florida's workers' compensation rates were some of the highest in the country. After passage of the 2003 reforms, Florida's rates were reduced six consecutive times, resulting in a cumulative rate decrease of 60.5 percent. After the Florida Supreme Court's October 2008 decision in *Murray v. Mariners Health*, which declared an ambiguity with regard to attorney's fees provisions, the Office of Insurance Regulation issued its first rate increase in years, approving a 6.4 percent rate increase.

"If workers' compensation rates continue to increase in the next few years, costs on Florida's businesses will continue to rise. In these tough economic times, additional financial burdens on Florida's businesses will lead to job losses in Florida," said Flores. "This legislation keeps Floridians working."

HB 903 is now on its way to the Governor for signature into law.

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